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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [UNSC](#) [BM](#)
SUBJECT: GAMBARI BRIEFS THE SECURITY COUNCIL ON BURMA;
DISCUSSION ON INFORMAL FOCUS GROUP

REF: USUN 662

Classified By: AMBASSADOR ZALMAY KHALILZAD, FOR REASONS 1.4 B/D

¶1. (C) Summary: On July 24, Special Envoy Ibrahim Gambari briefed the Security Council in advance of his mid-August trip to Burma. Gambari reviewed the same message and themes as during his July 23 meeting with the Friends of Burma (reftel). Among P5 members, the U.S., UK and France said Gambari must return with clear results, notably with regard to the negotiation of a political transition and the continued detention of Aung San Suu Kyi and other political prisoners. China and Russia said the climate was very good for engagement with Myanmar, and both praised the newly formed focus group, which includes China, India, Indonesia, Burma and the UN (Gambari). China criticized the Security Council,s meetings on Burma, saying "there is no need for the Council to hold meetings for the sake of holding meetings or always act as teachers." Separately, the Ambassador met with Indian PermRep Sen, who gave further detail on the focus group. End summary.

SECURITY COUNCIL MEETS ON BURMA

¶2. (SBU) In his briefing to the Council, Gambari went over the same ground as during his meeting a day before with the Friends of Burma. His mid-August visit would focus on 4 themes: 1) resumption of dialogue, preferably at a high level, between the government and Aung San Suu Kyi; 2) preparations for upcoming elections, to include discussion on monitors and UN technical assistance; 3) regularization of the UN,s good offices role, including the placing of staff in Rangoon; and 4) a national economic forum focusing on socioeconomic improvement, including reconstruction. Following Council interventions, Gambari said he was very encouraged by Council support, and understood the need for tangible results. The visit will have many challenges, but he will tell the Burmese authorities that the international community expects results, including the release of ASSK.

¶3. (SBU) Ambassador Khalilzad said Gambari should press for time-bound negotiations with specific benchmarks, as well as the release of ASSK and all political prisoners. He said there would be consequences for the Burmese regime if Gambari comes back empty-handed. A positive response by the Burmese authorities will be met with a positive response, but a non-response or a negative response will be seen very negatively, and the U.S. will need to look at other options. The U.S., UK and France all supported tying development and reconstruction aid to improvements in the political situation, while Russia opposed this as a "long-standing principle." China and Russia said that Burma,s relationship with the world was improving, and that conditions were ripe for Gambari,s visit. China criticized the Council,s involvement, saying "there is no need for the Security Council to act as teachers" and the Security Council "should not hold meetings just to hold meetings."

14. (SBU) Indonesia, Vietnam, Russia and China all supported ASEAN efforts, while Indonesia, China, Russia and Gambari supported the informal focus group (para 5). Belgium called the political situation "extremely disquieting," and noted Burma,s failure to meet the expectations outlined in the October 2007 PRST. Specifically, Belgium highlighted Burma,s refusal to release ASSK and other political prisoners and its unwillingness to engage in meaningful political dialogue. Panama stated that the Burmese political process had reached a state of "entropy," and called for the immediate release of ASSK and other political prisoners to enable them to participate in the political dialogue. Burkina Faso, South Africa, Italy, Libya, and Costa Rica did not make statements.

THE FOCUS GROUP - INDIA

15. (C) Indonesia briefly described the informal focus group during its intervention, saying the group seeks to assist Gambari and the UN. Burma is included in order to ensure ownership of its political process. During a bilateral meeting with India earlier on June 24, Indian PR Sen told the Ambassador that the focus group,s goal is to support Gambari and the good offices mission. The focus group has met "2-3 times," always informally, and will not be "institutionalized." The Chinese want a meeting of the focus group on the margins of the NAM conference in Teheran, but India will likely refuse, said Sen. India sees two advantages to the group: 1) it is an informal setting to engage an isolated Burma; and 2) it provides an opportunity for China to depart from its rigid Burma talking points and speak more informally. Sen said India and the U.S. have the

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same goals regarding Burma: a democratic and stable country. The Ambassador said it was important for India and other countries to press the Burmese authorities. Sen replied that every time India has exerted significant pressure, Chinese influence in Burma has grown at the expense of Indian influence. Given this dynamic, India must be flexible and nuanced, although it makes its positions clear with Burma, especially with respect to the release of ASSK.
Khalilzad